

and excavation commenced for the erection of a new building on Hastings Street which will not only better accommodate the increasing business of the bank, but will be an ornament to that part of the city.

The various denominations have found a habitation here, and just at present a second Presbyterian Church is talked of. Indeed, Brother Thomson has made a beginning and an encouraging service is being held in the west end. Subscriptions have been obtained and a site secured so that some progress has been made.

As in every new city, hotels abound here and outsiders are sure of accommodation, there being sixty-six hotels and saloons; which considering the size of the place, would seem to be out of all reasonable proportion.

The run to Kamloops was very pleasant and the scenery fine. At some points we get a view of the Thompson River which comes from the mountains northward. There is a population of about 1,000, and the principal industries are lumbering and cattle ranching. The town is beautifully situated in the shade of the mountains, which stand as the faithful sentinels of the citizens' dwellings. As in many other places the Presbyterian Church is the best Church in the place; it would put to blush some of the best in much larger places, and as it should be, the minister's manse is among the best houses in the "Interior City." The pastor is the Rev. Mr. Chisholm, a native of Nova Scotia and a graduate of Queen's University. It is not too much to say that Mr. Chisholm has done good work for the Church since his arrival in British Columbia, and the outlook for continued success is bright.

The remainder of the trip across the Rockies was of the usual exciting nature, but as so much has been written, and so many lectures descriptive of the scenery have been given, I will defer this to another occasion. K.

June, 1888.

MISSION TO NORTH SEA FISHERMEN, AND ITS RESULTS.

In the North Sea, off the coast of Holland and North Germany, between latitude fifty-four and fifty-six degrees, lies the great Dogger Bank, which extends 170 miles from north to south, and sixty-five miles from east to west, and from this bank are taken yearly more than 400,000 tons of fish to feed the inhabitants of London alone. Mr. E. J. Mather, director of a mission to the English trawlers, visited Nice this winter and gave an account of the work in the Scotch Church, and from him and others I received the information which I now communicate to the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, and which they will doubtless find as interesting as I did.

In 1881 Mr. Mather first heard of the existence of these "deep sea" fishermen, who are compelled, summer and winter, to brave the dangers of the deep and to ride out the heaviest gales, or founder, being too far from land to run for shelter. A great desire took possession of him to visit the fleet and see for himself the condition of its "floating population." He chose one of the steamers which ply daily, carrying the fish to market, between London and the fleet known as the "Short Blue," which lies about 300 miles from the Thames.

On his arrival he found that this fleet formed one of nineteen fleets similarly occupied, and in which are some 12,000 trawlers. The "Short Blue" consists of 230 smacks, each from fifty to sixty tons burden, having on board 1,500 hands. On reaching the fleet, 400 wild fellows were soon on board the steamer to get possession of the empty fish boxes to take to the smacks.

To the skill, endurance and daring of these men, London owes a large proportion of its constant supply of fish, of which Lady Nairne wrote:

They're no brought here without brave darin',
Wives and mithers, maist despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men.

Of these 1,500 smacksmen in the "Short Blue" fleet, Mr. Mather found there were only twenty-five or thirty who professed to be Christian men, the majority being utterly careless and godless. Still they are all, like sailors generally, unselfish, manly in their bearing, frank and outspoken. They are distinguished by tenacity of purpose, unflinching courage and coolness in face of danger.

Let us now consider the special dangers to which these men have long been exposed in addition to

those incident to all life at sea. They may perhaps be reduced to two, one arising from the process of ferrying the fish to the London steamer, and the other, the greater danger, arising from drinking poisonous stuff supplied by Dutchmen and others. The trawl is hauled, let us suppose, and as the net comes over the side of the smack, it empties on deck its finny treasures. Then commences the packing of the fish in boxes and lastly the

FERRYING THE BOXES

to the London steamer, to be carried to market. This, it seems, is the most perilous part of the smacksmen's duties. In one fleet alone, as many as thirty-five men lose their lives annually. When you bear in mind that there are nineteen fleets constantly at work you will get some idea of the price in the "lives of men" paid for deep sea fish. One trifling slip, one instant's inattention, one slight error of judgment, a hawser fouls, a sea is shipped and instantly the little boat and its crew are engulfed. One wild cry and all is over, help is vain. And yet this process is unavoidable if the fish are to be sent to market.

Of course incessant exposure to cold and wet induces many diseases. Bodily injuries, through accidents, are frequent, and formerly no help was near. The wounded had, therefore, to be carried on board the steamer and taken to London to be placed in an hospital, thereby having to endure two days' discomfort and pain before medical or surgical aid could be procured. How this has been obviated will be seen as we proceed. But a still more serious danger was encountered by these smacksmen for many a year from what was called

THE COPERS

which I will let a fisherman define. "It is," he said, "a floating hell, or little short of it; she's the public house, which we calls the 'coper,' out from Holland with grog and bacca." These Dutch traders for more than fifty years had infested the fleets, ostensibly to sell tobacco, but in reality to sell grog. Tobacco costs four shillings a pound on shore, but at sea only one shilling and sixpence. When the men went on board these boats to purchase tobacco, they were asked to "take von leetle drop o' drink," in order to induce a taste for it. This generally had the desired effect, and afterwards have it they must. If they had money to pay for it, all right; if not, they would take spare ropes, sails, nets, etc., robbing the owners of the smacks, as in the other case they robbed their wives and families, depriving themselves, at the same time of health and of a good conscience. Through these floating grogshops, therefore, inevitably resulted drunkenness, fraud, theft, suicide, loss of smacks, loss of life, ruined homes and broken hearts on shore.

An old weather-beaten fisherman who had spent twenty years at trawling declared "them copers to be the curse of the fleets. Many, many's the widow and orphan through the copers' stuff. It's bad enough when a man gets drunk on shore, but here where it takes us all we know to keep from goin' overboard, it's a bad look out for a man as gets muddled. Lots of 'em gets knocked overboard." The stuff sold was a compound of aniseed and the vilest brandy, the effects of which was simply maddening.

Such then was the condition of affairs, prior to the action taken by Mr. Mather and others on his return to London, as stated by another smacksmen: "In the whole fleet there won't be no church, no Gospel, no book read, not a bit of help no way for the poor fellows. Nothin' but the coper, leasways not unless one of the mission ships has joined the fleet. And if any of the lads get hurt or fall sick, there'll be neither doctor nor physick for him. If you'd been as long among trawlers as I've been, and know their life as well, you'd wonder they weren't coarser nor they be. No home, no church, no preacher, no Bible, leasways not save the Christian men, and there are some good 'uns. No anythin' but the coper. When they're home for a day or two refittin', they're so glad o' the rest they don't take no heed; if you want to help the trawlers, you must do it at the fleets."

It seems that each voyage occupies eight weeks through all the year, from the time these fishermen first ship as boys, until age incapacitates them for work. Occasionally between these voyages they may spend a few days ashore.

ON RETURN TO LONDON

Mr. Mather gave an account of what he had seen and heard in the fleet, at a meeting called for the purpose and his tale, the substance of which has been given

above, came as a great surprise to all. He asked that a smack should be fitted up for fishing and missionary purposes—that a Christian skipper and crew be put on board, and a cabin be provided for any clergyman who might volunteer his services. A friend at once lent £1,000 to purchase a smack as a trawler and mission vessel combined. The religious societies presented Bibles, books, tracts, etc., ladies gave woollen mufflers, mittens, etc., for the men; and a medicine chest and surgical instruments were also presented. The skipper received instructions how to treat ordinary cases of sickness and accidents. For a time the *Ensign* proved its utility not only as a floating hospital and surgery but as a centre of spiritual blessing. Such was the humble beginning of the mission to these hardy sons of toil who reap a perennial harvest among the finny tribes of the North Sea, a mission which has since grown immensely, and which is proving one of the greatest blessings of the age.

It was soon found that it was a mistake to combine trawling with mission work, for the fishing business did not pay. To carry on the mission on a sounder basis than before, Mr. Mather gave up his other occupations and devoted himself wholly to directing work. Eight gentlemen

FORMED A BOARD

and became registered owners first of four vessels, to which several others were afterwards added. The skippers and crews underwent training for the work they had to do. It was felt that the first thing they should aim at was to stop the occupation of the coper, and this was accomplished in the following manner. Fishing vessels not being permitted to carry tobacco under any circumstances, they began by removing all trawling gear from one vessel, thus converting her into an ordinary trader under the Shipping Act. They then took on board a cargo of tobacco in the Thames and cleared for Ostend. Here the German Consul received the consignment, and superintended the formalities necessary to pass it through the Belgian Customs.

The cargo was then transferred to a mission boat ready to receive it and carry it to the fleet. Including all charges of transit, harbour dues and the manufacturer's price, the tobacco had cost just one shilling a pound, and at this price they determined to sell it to the men. In this way they undersold the copers, and therefore stopped to a large extent their occupation in several of the North Sea fleets. In 1884, after the mission smacks had been about two years in existence, the copers began to say: "Those cursed mission ships are ruining our trade, and if many more of them come, there'll soon be no copers." They began to realize that their occupation was drawing to a close. An English gentleman passing soon after through Flushing was interviewed by a local smack-owner who offered him a handsome yawl-rigged craft at a price so low as to awaken a suspicion of trickery. "Oh," replied the owner, "Zhe fact is she was ver goot coper, but these horrid mission ships have knocked our trade on zhe head, and she is of little use to us now."

THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

of the six fishing powers—England, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium and Norway—which met at the Hague in November, 1887, and signed a treaty to prohibit the liquor traffic in the North Sea, has driven the last nail in the coffin of these "floating hells." If this receives the legislative sanction of the several countries represented, this great evil will be for ever ended in all the fishing fleets.

THE MISSION SMACKS

scattered amongst the fleets are open twice each Sunday, and often during the week, when services are held and the Gospel plainly preached. The men muster well; they like the singing and listen eagerly to a talk they can understand. The mission is affiliated to the Church of England Temperance Society, with what effect the following story will show. A smacksmen on going home drew £30 from the smack-owner, and in a week spent every penny of it in drink. At the end of the week he was off again to sea, leaving his wife and family in most grievous circumstances. Through the influence of the mission he was induced to join the Temperance Society, and became afterwards an earnest Christian man, standing firm against the coper and all his works. His once wretched wife and children are now well-dressed and happy: his home, once desolate and miserable, is now bright and comfortable.

Eleven clergymen accompanied the mission boats in 1886, and twelve in 1887, and their services were of the greatest value. One of these gentlemen who had been all around the globe in big steamers, said one day he would prefer to make the tour again rather than spend an hour on a smack with such a chopping sea as he had experienced in one day. This statement caused great amusement to the men, and a big brawny fellow said: "Well, sir, anyhow, if you broke to bits, the skipper 'ud be able to put you together again down below, he's so clever at chemistry. Why I seed him only last week mendin' a fellow up as had got his arm broke. It's a fine thing is that chemistry, an' we're right proud of our fisherman doctor, I can tell you." "Surgery you mean—not chemistry,"